



MONTHLY UPDATE

MAY 2006



♦ Empowering People ♦

Free Informational Seminars for new EID program

Maryland's Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene is administering the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) program, which allows eligible working Marylanders with disabilities to pay a small fee to keep their Medicaid health benefits.

To learn more about this program,
attend a free informational session:

May 15, 2006

1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

The Meeting House
Oakland Mills Interfaith Center
5885 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, Md. 21045

May 22, 2006

1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Robinwood Medical Center
RW3 Suite 142
11110 Medical Campus Rd.
Hagerstown, Md. 21742

May 23, 2006

1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Fountains Wedding & Conference Center
1800 Sweetbay Drive
Salisbury, Md. 21804

Make requests for accommodations to
info@mdworkforcepromise.org
or call (301) 662-0099 ext. 3522.

◆ Disability bills pass during 2006 session

Disability-related legislation gained significant support during the 2006 session with several major advances signed into law by **Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.** The Governor's legislation to establish an income modification for caregivers passed through the legislature. Another bill that passed requires a collaborative effort among state and local emergency management entities and licensed state programs serving vulnerable people to assure a working emergency plan is developed for each facility. Other highlights from the 2006 session include:

Housing

Several bills passed that will assist people with disabilities in housing issues. [Senate Bill 382](#) will provide homeowners with a property tax credit and renters with property tax relief. [Senate Bill 126](#) expands the Partnership Rental Housing Program, administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, to individuals with disabilities.

Education

A number of bills passed that were recommendations of the MDOD Education Task Force. These include [House Bill 710](#), which will set the stage for blind and visually impaired students to receive instructional materials in accessible formats electronically. [House Bill 1405](#) will require insurers who offer dependent status to full-time students who are adults to offer the same status to qualified students with disabilities who are taking at least seven credit hours. [House Bill 1681](#) establishes a grant program within community colleges to provide supplemental services and supports for students with disabilities.

Children

[Senate Bill 294](#) re-establishes Children, Youth and Family Services that were compromised during the 2005 session. Local Management Boards, the State Coordinating Council and Local Coordinating Councils were codified again into state statute. [House Bill 813](#) establishes requirements for contracts for residential child care programs, giving the state the ability to identify underserved areas and provide incentives to develop programs where needed.

For a more complete listing of disability-related legislation considered during the 2006 session, visit www.mdod.maryland.gov.

To receive MDOD Monthly Update, email mdod@mdod.state.md.us or call 1-800-637-4113 v/tty. This document is available in alternative formats.

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor ~ Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor ~ Kristen Cox, Secretary ~ Diane McComb, Deputy Secretary

◆ University of Maryland session stresses inclusiveness for students with disabilities

Administrators, faculty and students of the **University of Maryland, College Park**, met May 1, 2006 with a delegation from the Maryland Department of Disabilities to brainstorm about improving services and access for students with disabilities at the flagship campus.

After a brief tour highlighting recent accessibility improvements as well as future projects, MDOD **Secretary Kristen Cox** described MDOD's State Disabilities Plan, the Access Maryland Program, which has helped fund accessibility projects on campus, and other departmental initiatives involving education and training. The session featured free-flowing discussion ranging from the need to eliminate physical barriers to developing disability-related curriculum to expanding assistive technology available on campus.

Dr. William W. Destler, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and **John D. Porcari**, Vice President for Administrative Affairs, who helped organize and attended the session, expressed support for working on improvements to encourage full inclusion of students with disabilities at the College Park campus.

"We want to get to the point that this is a high priority on everyone's list," commented **Gay Gullickson**, Chair of the President's Commission for Disability Issues and a History Department professor. "Currently, students have to complain" to get their issues addressed.

"It's not just about accessibility and services," added **Claudia Rector**, Coordinator for Academic Planning and Programs. "What we'd like to see is a greater incorporation of disabilities studies across the curriculum."

Secretary Cox said she hoped to arrange future sessions to continue the dialogue, adding, "This has been a productive session – we've gotten many issues on the table."



Jessica Boone, Secretary Kristen Cox, Deputy Secretary Diane McComb, and Angel Miles discussed inclusiveness for students at the University.



Dr William W. Destler, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Deputy Secretary Diane McComb, Secretary Kristen Cox and John D. Porcari, Vice President for Administrative Affairs attended the brainstorming session.

◆ Governor Ehrlich presents 23rd Annual Volunteer Service Awards

In recognition of **National Volunteer Week** in April, **Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.** presented 40 Marylanders with service awards at the 23rd Annual Governor's Volunteer Awards Ceremony at the Maryland Hall for Creative Arts in Annapolis.

Ellen Archie of Independence Now was honored for her work mentoring people with disabilities. Ms. Archie, who survived an accident that left her with a spinal cord injury, managed to move out of a nursing home and began working to help others do the same. She was the inspiration for the Independence Now Peer Mentoring Project, which pairs people with disabilities living in the community with nursing facility residents.



◆ Secretary Cox to present May 19 at World of Possibilities Expo

MDOD **Secretary Kristen Cox** will present the 2006 State Disabilities Plan and take questions from consumers, advocates and service providers on May 19 at 3:00 p.m. at the **World of Possibilities Disabilities Expo** at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium. This year's World of Possibilities Expo, sponsored by Caring Communities, runs Friday, May 19, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, May 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, May 21, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday, May 21 is **"Imagine the Possibilities Autism Day,"** sponsored by Pathfinders for Autism and featuring support resources, autism-related augmentative communication/assistive technology exhibitors, autism-related workshops and more.

The World of Possibilities Disabilities Expo is the largest disabilities event in the Mid-Atlantic Region, featuring vendors of durable medical products and resources, assistive and adaptive equipment, local agencies and support groups, benefits planning, informative workshops, product demonstrations and exhibitors and attendees from across America.

Admission and parking are free (donations are accepted). For more information, contact **Caring Communities at 1-866-227-4644** or visit www.caringcommunities.org.